
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

TARGET POPULATION

TANF adults with limited education and job skills and a limited employment history, as they engage in work activities; some of these adults will need to initially focus on “personal” barriers or their English language skills and then move to addressing their educational and training needs. “Personal barriers” may include mental health or substance abuse issues, domestic violence, etc, and tend to be addressed in “transitional jobs” or “supported work” programs.

GOALS

- Help TANF parents prepare for, find, and keep living wage jobs.
- Improve access to the education and training that will provide for long-term economic self-sufficiency.
- Create a more skilled workforce for employers that is aligned with the state’s goals for economic competitiveness.

CHALLENGES

- Many TANF parents have had negative experiences with the educational system, and have serious educational deficits and a spotty work history. Creating the right educational environment to boost them over the “tipping point” (allowing access to living wage jobs) will be a challenge.
- It is also important to ensure that parents have both the job seeking skills to obtain employment and the soft skills needed for job retention.
- Another challenge is to balance and align the economic interests of individual employers, unions, and the state.
- Finally, effectively preparing low-skilled TANF parents for living wage jobs will require an upfront investment that may not see the immediate return of shorter-term programs and may challenge the constraints of federal work participation rules.

WHAT WE DO IN WASHINGTON STATE

Parents applying for TANF support go through an initial screening called streamlined comprehensive evaluation to determine service needs and appropriateness for a workforce development referral. If determined ready for workforce development activities, the options are:

- **Unsubsidized employment:** Parents who are currently employed or self-employed or are participating in work study or being paid for work experience, a practicum, or an internship, can apply to receive partial cash assistance, subsidized child care, WorkFirst support services, food assistance and medical. Employment hours may need to be supplemented with an additional

work activity to meet the state's WorkFirst participation standard of 32 hours for a single parent.

- **Employment services:** Parents determined to be job ready receive intensive employment services for up to 12 weeks, including assessment of work skills and education, employment counseling, job referrals, and job coaching. On the job training (OJT) opportunities are also available.
- **Career Services:** For parents recently exited from TANF or approved for Diversion Cash Assistance and working a minimum of 30 hours per week in unsubsidized employment. The program provides job retention and wage progression assistance, monthly cash payments, job referrals to higher skilled jobs, and information on education and training opportunities.
- **Supported Work programs:** For parents to obtain employment skills and experience while they are: 1) engaged in other activities, 2) waiting for an activity to start while working with social workers and specialists for continued intensive services, or 3) to acquire experience to become more competitive in the labor market. Activities include Community Jobs, Community Service, Community Works, and Community Work Experience.
- **Education and Training:** For parents who are currently engaged in education, close to completing a degree or certificate, who want to explore occupational options that require training, and/or have not completed a secondary credential and wish to do so in order to increase their employability and wage earning capacity. Activities include Vocational Education, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), Job Skills Training and Adult Basic Education (ABE/GED and ESL).
- **LEP Pathway:** For parents who have difficulty understanding or communicating in English and are unable to support their families. Activities include specialized employment services for adults who receive assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), State Family Assistance (SFA), or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs. Refugees who do not receive cash assistance are also eligible for LEP Pathway program services. Services include English as a Second Language (ESL), Skills Training, Work Experience (WEX), Community Service (CS), and job placement and retention assistance.

BEST AND PROMISING PRACTICES

High-performing workforce development programs commonly include some or all of the features highlighted below. To be considered a “best practice,” a program must be evidence-based and/or be recognized as a national model. Other important considerations are the size or scale of the program, its cost, and whether it currently or could potentially serve TANF clients. “Promising practices” are programs that do not meet these standards but are still innovative and contain elements that could be of interest in Washington’s TANF redesign effort.

- **Career Pathways:** Use of career and education pathways as a framework to counsel clients and plan their workforce development objectives and activities.
- **One-on-one employment services:** Employment services and career counseling to improve job seeking skills, job retention skills, and wage/career progression.

- **Case management:** Provide intensive assessment, counseling, guidance, and referral to agencies and community resources to remove barriers to employment and help clients succeed in their activities.
- **Integrated instruction:** Coordinate and integrate basic academic and language instruction with vocational training to streamline time-to-credential.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with other agencies (including 2-year colleges, workforce investment boards, employer groups, and community-based organizations) to coordinate resources and support services to help meet the various needs of TANF recipients. In some programs, CBOs play major recruitment and case management roles. In some states, workforce investment boards provide access to WIA funds.
- **Supported work:** Provides subsidized, supported work opportunities for those who need it; gives parents the skills and confidence they need to be competitive in the job market. Results are strengthened when combined with appropriate training. Supported work programs are geared to clients with personal barriers to employment in addition to low skills – these barriers could include mental health or chemical dependency issues, domestic violence, a history of incarceration, etc.
- **Internships – subsidized or unpaid:** Incorporate unpaid or subsidized work opportunities, including work-study, in career pathway programs, allowing completion of credited, credential and/or degree programs within TANF participation limits
- **Post-placement support:** Provide job development and post-placement support services to clients and their employers.

We have further divided best and promising practice programs between those geared toward parents with significant personal barriers to employment and those geared toward parents without these barriers. By “personal barriers” we mean mental health or substance abuse issues, domestic violence, history of incarceration, etc. All of these programs serve parents with low educational levels and low job skills.

Best or Promising Practice Current Washington State programs are highlighted below	Career Pathways	Employment Services	Case Management	Integrated Instruction	Partnerships	Supported Work	Paid or Unpaid Internships	Post-Placement Support
BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENTS WITH PERSONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT								
1. Washington Community Jobs Fact Sheet			X			X		
PROMISING PRACTICES FOR PARENTS WITH PERSONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT								
2. Chicago, Illinois – Harborquest Fact Sheet			X			X		

Best or Promising Practice Current Washington State programs are highlighted below	Career Pathways	Employment Services	Case Management	Integrated Instruction	Partnerships	Supported Work	Paid or Unpaid Internships	Post-Placement Support
3. New York City – POP Fact Sheet		X				X		
4. St. Louis Missouri – ARCHS Fact Sheet		X	X		X	X		
5. Columbus, Ohio –Integrated Case Management Fact Sheet		X	X	X				X
BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENTS WITHOUT PERSONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT								
6. California CalWorks Fact Sheet		X	X				X	
7. El Paso, Texas Project QUEST Fact Sheet	X	X	X		X			
8. Kentucky Ready-to-Work Fact Sheet	X	X	X				X	X
9. Portland Oregon Welfare-to-Work Fact Sheet	X	X	X		X			X
10. Washington I-BEST Fact Sheet	X	X	X	X			X	
11. Welcome Back Center – San Francisco, CA Fact Sheet	X		X					
PROMISING PRACTICES FOR PARENTS WITHOUT PERSONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT								
12. Arkansas - Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) Fact Sheet	X	X	X					
13. Chicago, Illinois - Healthcare Bridge at Daley Comm College Fact Sheet	X	X	X	X	X			
14. Denver, Colorado - Essential Skills Fact Sheet	X	X	X				X	
15. Minnesota – MnBEST Fact Sheet	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
16. Michigan – Peer to Peer Fact Sheet	X							
17. New York State - Career Pathways Program Fact Sheet	X	X	X		X			X
18. Northern Virginia Family Services Fact Sheet	X		X	X	X			

Best or Promising Practice Current Washington State programs are highlighted below	Career Pathways	Employment Services	Case Management	Integrated Instruction	Partnerships	Supported Work	Paid or Unpaid Internships	Post-Placement Support
19. Pennsylvania - KEYS Program Fact Sheet	X	X	X		X			
20. San Antonio, Texas – Project ARRIBA Fact Sheet	X	X	X		X			X
21. Spokane Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP) – Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) Fact Sheet	X	X	X					X
22. Spokane Neighborhood Assistance Program (SNAP) – Microenterprise Development Fact Sheet		X	X					X
23. Wisconsin RISE Fact Sheet	X	X		X				
24. Grand Rapids, Michigan - The Source Fact Sheet	X	X			X			

LESSONS LEARNED

Some strategies that had no or modest impacts on employment, earnings, and/or reduced use of public assistance:

Riverside, CA: Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) program. Provided case management, counseling and mentoring, reemployment services, referral to training and social services.	Despite some increase in employment and earnings at 3 out of 5 sites, there was no increase in retention of initial jobs (but faster re-employment), no overall impact on TANF or food stamp receipt, and most referred services were minimally accessed. The very modest outcomes of this program indicate that case management and employment/reemployment services by themselves are not an adequate model.
Chicago, Illinois: Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Program. Staff-client relationships, assistance with targeted job search and identifying opportunities for wage	This program produced only very modest increases in employment and wages (impacts on annual income were not statistically significant over three years), most jobs were still low paying, and many clients were still eligible for TANF. There was some reduction in

progression from entry level positions.	welfare use. The very modest outcomes of this program indicate the limits of wage progression outside the context of education and training.
Multiple states studied by NEWWS (see – Portland, Oregon Welfare-to Work-Programs factsheet for more info) - evaluation and follow-up on labor force development (LFD) and human capital development (HCD) programs continue to confirm that neither homogenous approach has as much impact on welfare-to work-goals as integrated approaches that were based on the clients' individual needs.	LFD programs lead to greater immediate increases in employment more than HCD, but approaches that combined LFD and HCD and tailored programs to meet clients' assessed needs had the largest and most sustained outcomes for greater employment and wages, and lower welfare dependence than of the other programs. "Working your way up" and achieving family wage employment without education and training rarely happens in today's job market. To be effective, education and training has to be closely connected to the labor market, with employer input on needed skills and knowledge.

REFERENCES

For more information and links to background documents, see Workforce Development Matrix - Practices in Other States

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